

Testimony Nov 2 2011

Good Afternoon Senators:

I represent the Michigan Production Alliance, an organization made up of crew members and producers who are on the front lines of production in Michigan. I have been a crew member on corporate, commercial and feature films for many years and I am a member of IATSE.

Michigan has had a film industry for at least 70 years. It was based on corporate, war propaganda, commercials and feature films. Features used to be shot in Michigan but they would bring in crews from Hollywood and Chicago to fill positions. Because we never really grew in features a great many crew positions were simply not filled. We could not train people as visual designers, production designers and weapons armorers. We still lack those crafts in any depth but we are growing – would have keep growing if water were not thrown on our fire.

Since 2000, MPA has advocated strongly for commercial production to be included in any incentive bill. Commercials are our bread and butter for preproduction Production and Post production. Because we have been making films here for so many years we do have an infrastructure and a great many crew members. Problem is, for feature films one tends to have to HAVE feature specific experience TO GET feature experience. BUT for commercial work a strong skill set is all that is required...that is one BIG reason for you to consider commercials. MI workers will benefit on a long term basis in all areas of these productions and in all parts of the state. You must also understand however, that in order to make incentives on commercials effective the turn around for approval must be 48 hours or less.

These productions bring HUGE dollars to Michigan FASTER than films BUT they are ordered at the last minute//even campaigns// and need to know that they can get locations and crew and of course savings YESTERDAY...yes that fast. It can be done – other states have models so we don't have to reinvent the wheel – we just need to do it right – RIGHT from the start to win confidence.

There has always a path for production in Michigan. You start on small projects indies and corporate, work up skills to get on commercials, then you can parley those skills to get on features. Some who work on commercials do not wish to work on features because frankly the money is better for crews...but shorter duration one day to one week. All the feature work does also tend to present problems for commercial producers because we don't have enough people to do films and commercials. BUT If we do it right we can develop enough depth to support strong feature crews AND commercial crews. So I urge you to take advise from people who know how the commercial production industry works and then we can really build a strong industry...Commercials AND Features// a MIX as it should be.

On another topic I would urge you to avoid forcing production companies to produce promotional acknowledgements on projects as it could be a deal breaker. A simple logo should be fine. I also question the provision requiring a percentage of the productions cost be paid as an application fee. I would urge you to just set a fee.

Finally, I think Michigan taxpayers would appreciate it if a provision requiring companies to prove that their vendors and crews have all been paid in full were applied. Before any company receives a post production certificate, this proof would address a problem that has existed and burdened many Michigan production taxpayers.

Thank you.

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